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NEWS RELEASE

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MERCED METH SUPER-LAB SUSPECTS INDICTED

FRESNO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Alfredo NUNO, 29, of Turlock, California; Francisco Javier Flores ARROYO, 20, of Stevinson, California; Miguel Medrano GARCIA, 25, of Michoacán, Mexico; Miguel Angel Quintana NIETO, 29, of Michoacán, Mexico; Luis Reyes MOLINA, 22, of Michoacán, Mexico; and Arnoldo Molina MANERA 22, of Michoacán, Mexico, with conspiring to manufacture and distribute methamphetamine. The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned on March 7, 2008 before United States Magistrate Judge Gary S. Austin at 1:30 p.m.

This case is the product of an extensive joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration—Modesto Post of Duty, Stanislaus Drug Enforcement Agency, Central Valley HIDTA, California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Enforcement Team, Fresno Methamphetamine Task Force, and Merced County's Sheriff's Office.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kathleen A. Servatius, who is prosecuting the case, during the execution of a search warrant at 2917 Cemetery Road, Stevinson, agents discovered a fully operational methamphetamine laboratory. A large amount of methamphetamine solution had been produced at the laboratory, resulting in the production of 100 to 200 pounds of finished methamphetamine. Four of the individuals fled from the residence at the approach of agents but were apprehended a short distance from the house. Agents also recovered a firearm that had been discarded by one of the suspects as he fled.

The statutory penalty for a violation is a mandatory minimum of 10 years and a maximum of life in custody and a four million dollar fine. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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